

MICRO LEAGUE

Baseball®

1988 STANDINGS

AL EAST					AL WEST				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	89	73	.549	-	Oakland	104	58	.642	-
Detroit	88	74	.543	1	Minnesota	91	71	.562	13
Milwaukee	87	75	.537	2	Kansas City	84	77	.522	19.5
Toronto	87	75	.537	2	California	75	87	.463	29
New York	85	76	.528	3.5	Chicago	71	90	.441	32.5
Cleveland	78	84	.481	11	Texas	70	91	.435	33.5
Baltimore	54	107	.335	34.5	Seattle	68	93	.422	35.5

NL EAST					NL WEST				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
New York	100	60	.625	-	Los Angeles	94	67	.584	-
Pittsburgh	85	75	.531	15	Cincinnati	87	74	.540	7
Montreal	81	81	.500	20	San Diego	83	78	.516	11
Chicago	77	85	.475	24	San Fran	83	79	.512	11.5
St. Louis	76	86	.469	25	Houston	82	80	.506	12.5
Phila	65	96	.404	35.5	Atlanta	54	106	.338	39.5

1988 Season Overview

The last few Major League seasons have all had some type of headline story. Whether it be the strike of '85 or the Homeruns of '87 there was always something to talk about! However, how will the '88 season be remembered? Perhaps as status quo with things turning out the way they are supposed to be. That is, the '88 season was a great season for the purist. Everything seemed to be on an even keel and "typical" for the National pasttime. After all.... Billy Martin was fired by George Steinbrenner, Wade Boggs was "flirting" with .400, Sparky Anderson surprised everyone with a contender, Roger Clemens and Nolan Ryan were striking out at least one batter per inning, the Reds were finishing in second place and Seattle and Atlanta finished the season! Need we say more? In fact except for a horrendous 0-21 start by the hapless Orioles and Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant impersonations from Pete Rose and Dave Pallome in May everything stayed status quo. Until October!

The division races lacked any real drama. The Mets, A's and Dodgers controlled their divisions relatively easy. It looked like Sparky Anderson was going to accomplish the impossible and put together back-to-back AL East titles. However, a collapse in late August to mid-September dashed the hopes of the motor city kitties. This paved the way for Boston to back into the ALCS with 3 straight losses at the end of the season.

October was soon upon us and again many fans thought there would be no surprises. We had the two best teams in every category, and the guess was Oakland and New York were headed for the best World Series in many years. The A's obliged us by manhandling Boston in 5 games, but that's where the status quo ended in 1988. Amid heroics by Cy Young award winner Orel Hershisser and MVP Kirk Gibson the Dodgers upset the Mets in 7 Games in the NLCS, setting the stage for an all California World Series. Surely the undermanned and overmatched Dodgers (including a limping Kirk Gibson with a badly pulled hamstring) had no chance against Oakland's new version of the Murderer's Row.

The Series (and perhaps the season) ended at least symbolically in the first game. The Dodgers got off to a quick 2-0 start in the bottom of the first only to see that quickly evaporate on Jose Canseco's line drive grand slam HR that put a dent in the NBC camera located in CF. Another run in the 5th put the Dodgers within striking distance. But when ace reliever, Dennis Eckersley retired the first 2 in the bottom of the 9th the A's looked to be 1 game up and on their way. However, the baseball gods granted us one of those magic moments only they could deliver. After a walk to Mike Davis, the moment was on hand. MVP Kirk Gibson, who wasn't even introduced along the 3rd base line at the beginning of game one, (and who just 20 minutes earlier was receiving treatments on his severely pulled hamstring) hobbled to the plate. At exactly 8:37 P.M. EDT with the count full, Gibson ala Roy Hobbs and Bobby Thompson hit an Eckersley fast ball off his front foot into the rightfield stands and baseball history. In shock, the A's never recovered and the Dodger fairy tale came true 4 games to 1.

Also of note around the majors in '88, in the AL Oakland had back to back Rookies of the Year with Walt Weiss joining Mark McGuire last year. Only the Tigers in the AL East came close (1 game) to repeating while the other '87 division winners St. Louis, Minnesota, and San Francisco ended up a combined 49 1/2 games back. The State legislature in Illinois came through with the most exciting baseball moment in Chicago in '88 with an 11th hour vote to accomodate the White Sox stadium request and kept the Pale Hose on the South Side. Milwaukee, Toronto, and New York had almost identical records coming just short of 90 wins -- proving again that the AL East is the best division in baseball with 5 teams ending up 3 1/2 games or less from the division title and all at least 10 games over .500.

In the NL, the demise of the Cardinals and Phillies was a surprise in the East, as was the resurgence of the Dodgers and Padres in the West. The individual exploits belonged to Darryl Strawberry (Mets) Will Clark (Giants) and Andre Dawson (Cubs) leading in almost all offensive categories. Tony Gwynn (yawn!) again led the league with a .313 average.

Status quo or not, '88 was truly an enjoyable year. Were the Dodgers really the best team? As Tommy Lasorda said while receiving the W.S. trophy "We're not the best team in the NL, we're not even the best team in the Western division. We're only the best in the world!". Is Tommy right or wrong? Only in the Micro Leagues can you find out!

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Stats for a player are based on his
total season irrespective of teams.

PLAYERS NOTE

To use any MLB TEAM DISK: First completely load the MLB GAME DISK. When the screen asks you to choose a visiting or home team, replace the Game disk with the MLB TEAM DISK and hit the RETURN key. You will then see the listing of all teams on that disk, then you can pick the team(s) you want. (See Manager's Rulebook for help).

Stats for a player are based on his total season irrespective of team(s).

Los Angeles Dodgers

94-67

NL West 1st

Picked by many experts to finish dead last in the NL West, Tommy Lasorda's team not only won the division -- they won it handily leading almost from wire-to-wire. Finishing the '87 season 16 games below .500 and 17 games behind the Giants, newly-appointed Fred Claire went to work.

With shortstop and relief pitching as his major projects, Claire obtained Alfredo Griffin, Jay Howell and Jesse Orosco through trades and won the division with the signing of '88 MVP Kirk Gibson (via free agency from the Tigers). Gibson's attitude and intensity rubbed off on the Dodgers as the club yelled and played their way into the hearts of millions by winning the NL crown and World Series as underdogs against the Mets and then the A's.

Orel Hershisier led the Dodgers on the mound, winning the Cy Young award with 23-8 record & 2.26 ERA. Then he put the finishing touches to his dream season by winning the MVP of the NLCS and World Series. Another remarkable feat was Hershisier's breaking of Don Drysdale's 59 consecutive shutout innings streak set 20 years earlier in 1968. Hershisier broke the record by 1 inning, allowing only 36 hits & 11 walks in the 60 record scoreless innings. "When you talk about his year" quipped Manager Tommy Lasorda, "you've got to say it's one of the finest years by a pitcher who's ever played the game".

New York Mets

100-60

NL East 1st

"A sure bet...". "One of the best teams of the decade...". These were the type of accolades that followed the NY Mets all year long and rightfully so. The Mets had a NL-leading 100 wins along with the best team ERA (2.91), and also led the league in runs (703), On Base % (.325) and Home Runs (152).

The Mets didn't let down the fans in the Big Apple -- they won the NL East in a rout by 15 games over the second place Pirates. However, the "sure bet..." was foiled in the NLCS as the Mets were "Bulldogged" by Orel Hershisier and the Dodgers in a tight 7 game series.

The offense was led by MVP candidate Darryl Strawberry who led the league with 39 HRs. Kevin McReynolds (.288, 27HRs) and Howard Johnson (.230; 24HRs) also added punch to a very powerful lineup.

Defensively, the Mets also excelled with steady handed Keith Hernandez and a superb outfield of McReynolds, Strawberry and Mike Wilson. Dave Cone (20-3; 2.22 ERA) and Randy Myers (a phenomenal 1.72 ERA) anchored the best pitching staff in the major leagues.

Although the Mets suffered a heart breaking loss to the Dodgers on paper they are set to be contenders for '89 and many years to come.

Sunday afternoons at Oakland-Alameda Coliseum in 1988 could have been confused with the old Charles Atlas "Muscle Beach Bully" ads. Led by a line up of Jose Canseco, Mark McGuire, Dave Parker, Don Baylor and Dave Henderson, the A's could have been better matched with the Oakland Raiders of 1968 rather than the American League West of 1988.

Canseco, who became the first player in Major League history to reach the 40/40 mark (42 Hrs and 40 SB) was a runaway for the AL MVP award. Canseco paced the powerful Athletic Attack and ended up in the top 5 in 8 different offensive categories. McGuire was no slouch either, and what a performance by Weiss at shortstop!

Dennis Eckersley was the stopper the A's had hoped he would be, leading the majors with 45 saves with a 4-2 record and a 2.38 ERA. Dave Stewart led the starting staff with a 21-12 record and a 3.23 ERA.

The A's blew past the Red Sox in the ALCS to win their first AL title since 1974. Heavily favored against the surprising Dodgers, Canseco and company were stymied by Hershiser and the Dodgers 4 games to 1.

The Red Sox began the year with a bang. There was trouble in the front office, a manager fired at mid-season, a classic superstar & manager shoving match and a classic late '80's sex scandal. Yet through all of the tribulation, Joe Morgan led the Sox through the hard times to the AL East crown.

The Green Monster notwithstanding, the Red Sox had the most potent offense in baseball led by Wade Boggs whose at-the-plate exploits produced a Major League-leading .366 average. The Red Sox had a scintillating .283 team batting average and 813 runs scored led both leagues. There was never a dull moment at Fenway as a total of six starters (Boggs, Greenwell, Burks, Dwight Evans, Reed, and Barrett) all hit over .280 -- contract renegotiation time!

The righty/lefty one-two punch of "Rocket" Rogers Clemens (18-12 2.93) and Bruce Hurst (18-6, 3.66) was hard to beat. Although in the middle of the pack in team ERA at 3.93, the Sox led the majors in strike outs with 1085, and had a league leading 14 shutouts. Overmatched against a powerful Oakland team, Boston succumbed meekly in the ALCS.

Credits

1988 stats are due to the yeoman efforts of Joe Scott, MLB Scouts across the country, Barry Morstain, and Barb Greger. This writeup was authored by Mark Trigsted who also contributed to stat review.

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